



U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
Pacific Southwest / Region 9



*Serving Arizona, California, Hawaii, Nevada, the Pacific Islands and 147 Tribes*

Enforcement Division  
Air and Toxics Release Inventory (TRI) Section

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## The 2012 Public Data Release General Information

### What is the Toxics Release Inventory?

The Toxics Release Inventory (TRI) is a publicly available EPA database of information on toxic chemical releases and waste management activities reported annually by certain industries and by federal facilities.

This inventory was established under the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act of 1986 which was enacted to promote emergency planning, to minimize the effects of chemical accidents, and to provide the public with information on releases of toxic chemicals in their communities. TRI requirements are legally enforceable under EPCRA.

### What is a Release?

A TRI “release”, as defined by the Federal reporting law, is the amount of a TRI toxic chemical that is discharged or emitted by a facility to the environment. TRI includes more than 600 chemicals and chemical compounds.

There are two major categories of releases: **on-site** and **off-site**.

On-site releases occur at the facility and are categorized as: 1) air emissions, 2) discharges to surface water, 3) underground injections, and 4) releases to land.

Off-site releases are transfers to other facilities for disposal, treatment, or recycling.

TRI data reflect the quantities of TRI chemicals that are disposed of, released to the environment, or managed (for example, treated, or recycled) by industrial and federal facilities. TRI data do

not include information about public exposure to chemicals. The lists of top facilities by state are best used as a screening tool to identify facilities that may warrant a closer examination. Large disposal and release numbers do not necessarily mean there is a large risk. “Disposal or other releases” represent a wide variety of management methods. These range from highly controlled disposal, such as in hazardous waste landfills, to uncontrolled releases due to leaks. Many disposal and releases reported to TRI are subject to permits and/or environmental standards that establish emissions limits under Federal or State laws such as, for example, air permits issued under the Clean Air Act.

### Automated Fact Sheets to See Toxics Releases Near You

Scroll down at the link [www.epa.gov/tri](http://www.epa.gov/tri) to enter your zip code, city, or county, and the new tool will create a fact sheet to show you toxic releases near you.

### Releases and Health Effects

In the TRI program, facilities report only the amount (in pounds) of their chemical releases. To evaluate risk, release data must be combined with information about chemical toxicity, site-specific conditions, and exposure. TRI information can be combined with additional information and tools to better identify potential health risks from industrial toxics releases.

### Who is Reporting?

A facility is subject to TRI reporting requirements if it meets **all three** of the following requirements: 1) has 10 or more full-time employee equivalents (20,000 work hours per year); 2) is classified under a reportable North American Industrial Classification Code (NAICS); and 3) manufactures, processes, or otherwise uses any of the listed toxic chemicals in amounts greater than the threshold quantities.

Reporting thresholds for most chemicals are 25,000 pounds for chemicals manufactured or processed, and 10,000 pounds for chemicals otherwise used. Manufacturing industries have been reporting their releases since 1987 and federal facilities since 1994. In 1998, seven additional industry sectors began reporting their toxic chemical releases to EPA. These sectors are metal and coal mining, electricity generation, commercial hazardous waste treatment, solvent recovery, petroleum bulk terminals, and wholesale chemical distributors.

### **Persistent Bioaccumulative and Toxic (PBT) Chemicals**

In the year 2000, TRI was expanded to include additional Persistent Bioaccumulative and Toxic (PBT) chemicals and to require reporting for these chemicals at lower thresholds, ranging from 0.1 grams to 100 pounds depending on the chemical. PBT pollutants are toxic chemicals that persist in the environment and bioaccumulate in food chains, posing risks to human health and ecosystems.

### **The 2012 Public Data Release**

EPA has made public the 2012 data on toxic chemicals that were released to the air, water, and land. This data is available through the EPA websites listed below. For reports on states and islands in Region 9, visit the Region 9 website at: <http://www.epa.gov/region9/toxic/tri/>

### **Where Can I Find Information on TRI?**

For national information on data releases, see: <http://www.epa.gov/tri>

The TRI data is available through Envirofacts Warehouse, EPA's main internet site for environmental information at:

<http://www.epa.gov/enviro>

Or the TRI Explorer tool:

<http://www.epa.gov/triexplorer>

For general information on the Toxics Release Inventory, including reporting requirements for businesses, go to:

[www.epa.gov/region9/toxic/tri](http://www.epa.gov/region9/toxic/tri)

For more information on EPA's PBT Chemicals Program, go to:

<http://www.epa.gov/opptintr/pbt>

### **Who Can I Contact About TRI Information?**

Region 9 staff will answer questions and assist you in learning more about the TRI Program.

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